

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I L SECTION 1 OF 4 USBERLIN 0519

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SUBJ: BERLIN NARCOTICS PROBLEM AND US CONCERNS: CODEL BURKE VISIT

REF: (A) USBERLIN 0341, (B) BONN 0146, (C) STATE 052237

BEGIN SUMMARY: INTEREST BY US OFFICIALS AND AGENCIES HAS HELPED TO RALLY SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE BERLIN ANTI-DRUG EFFORTS. DEA HAS BEEN COOPERATIVE AND HELPFUL. SOME IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE BERLIN PROBLEM, HOWEVER, ARE NOT EASILY UNDERSTOOD FROM AFAR. QUESTIONS POSED DURING THE RECENT VISIT BY CODEL BURKE SHOWED A TENDENCY TO

A) EXAGGERATE THE PRESENT IMPACT OF THE US DOMESTIC DRUG SCENE OF NARCOTICS REACHING BERLIN; B) ASSUME A SMUGGLING ROLE BY US MILITARY PERSONNEL; AND C) UNDER-ESTIMATE THE LIKELY DAMAGE TO WESTERN POLITICAL POSITIONS IN BERLIN WERE WE TO ATTEMPT COMPREHENSIVE CONTROLS ON TRAVELLERS ENTERING THE WESTERN SECTORS. NARCOTICS BEING A LONG HAUL, US CONCERN - PARTICULARLY CONGRESSIONAL - WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO DEVELOP. THE DEPARTMENT MAY WELL FACE GROWING PRESSURES TO "DO SOMETHING" WITH RESPECT TO BERLIN. THIS MESSAGE
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PROVIDES OUR CURRENT READING OF THE PROBLEM. WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING POUCHED COPIES OF ANY PUBLISHED MATERIALS, SUCH AS HEARINGS OR OTHER COMMITTEE REPORTS, REFLECTING THE TREND IN CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES RELEVANT TO BERLIN AND NARCOTICS. END SUMMARY.

1. BERLIN'S SERIOUS HEROIN PROBLEM IS A SOURCE OF

LEGITIMATE FRUSTRATION TO EVERYONE INTERESTED IN COMBATTING NARCOTICS. STRONG US OFFICIAL CONCERN HAS LED TO HELPFUL INVOLVEMENT BY DEA, THE WHITE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON DRUG ABUSE, AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DRUG ABUSE. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IS ALSO SUPPORTIVE OF ANTI-NARCOTICS PROGRAMS AMONG US MILITARY PERSONNEL HERE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE BEGINNING TO DETECT SIGNS OF A WORRISOME TENDENCY BY SOME WHO ARE CONCERNED WITH US DRUG PROBLEMS BUT NOT INTIMATELY FAMILIAR WITH BERLIN'S PROBLEMS AND WHO DRAW INACCURATE OR AT LEAST PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS.

2. THIS WAS BROUGHT MOST CLEARLY TO OUR ATTENTION WITH THE VISIT TO BERLIN FEBRUARY 22-25 BY CODEL BURKE, TRAVELLING UNDER DEA AND DOD AUSPICES. THE DELEGATION WAS LED BY CONGRESSMAN J. HERBERT BURKE, RANKING MINORITY MEMBER OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON NARCOTICS ABUSE. IT CONSISTED IN ADDITION OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF AND ONE OTHER STAFF MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, AS WELL AS A DEA REPRESENTATIVE AND AN ARMY ESCORT AND OBSERVER. WE HEARD INFORMALLY IN ADVANCE THROUGH DEA CHANNELS THAT A CODEL WAS COMING, AND THAT IT WAS CONCERNED THAT US MILITARY PERSONNEL WERE SMUGGLING NARCOTICS INTO THE US. (REFTEL A INQUIRING ABOUT THIS GROUP WAS UNFORTUNATELY SLUGGED CODEL WOLFF, WHOM DEA THOUGHT AT FIRST WOULD LEAD THE DELEGATION.)
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3. MISSION OFFICERS MET WITH THE CODEL EARLY DURING ITS VISIT IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE CLEAR THAT BERLIN'S HEROIN PROBLEM IS PRIMARILY CIVILIAN, AND THAT GI'S ARE NOT KNOWN TO BE INVOLVED IN MAJOR SMUGGLING OR DEALING. THE CODEL EXHIBITED A SYMPATHETIC INTEREST IN BERLIN'S PROBLEM, WHILE DISPLAYING SEVERAL SERIOUS MISCONCEPTIONS IN ADDITION TO THE ASSUMPTION THAT GI'S ARE SMUGGLING. CHIEF AMONG THESE WAS THE BELIEF THAT THE FREE FLOW OF DRUGS INTO BERLIN MEANS THAT LARGE QUANTITIES ARE ALSO BEING TRANS-SMUGGLED FROM BERLIN TO OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN AND US MARKETS. THE CODEL SHOWED LITTLE INITIAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE REASONS WHY WAYS HAVE NOT BEEN FOUND TO INSTITUTE EFFECTIVE CUSTOMS CHECKS ON PERSONS ENTERING BERLIN'S WESTERN SECTORS.

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4. US MILITARY, MISSION AND BERLIN POLICE REPRESENT-
ATIVES REVIEWED FOR THE CODEL THE FOLLOWING FACTS
CONCERNING THE CURRENT BERLIN DRUG SCENE AND THE
DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING A SOLUTION: 83 BERLIN RESIDENTS
DIED IN 1977 OF OVERDOSES. (THE OFFICIAL BERLIN POLICE
FIGURE OF 84 OVERDOSE DEATHS INCLUDES ONE US SOLDIER.
US MILITARY AUTHORITIES EXPLAINED TO THE CODEL THAT
2 GI'S DIED OF NARCOTICS AND ALCOHOL OVERDOSE IN 1977
IN BERLIN, WITH AN ADDITIONAL 2 DEATHS PROBABLY DRUG-
RELATED.)

5. HEROIN COMES TO BERLIN IN LARGE PART FROM OR VIA
TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST, REACHING THE WESTERN SECTORS
OF THE CITY BY A GREAT VARIETY OF MEANS - ALMOST NONE
OF THEM CONTROLLED BY THE WEST TO ANY SIGNIFICANT DEGREE.
WHILE TURKS AND MIDDLE EASTERNERS MAKE UP THE BULK OF
THOSE CAUGHT TRAFFICKING, CUSTOMERS AND THOSE DYING OF
OVERDOSES HAVE BEEN ALMOST ENTIRELY GERMANS. SOME
AMERICAN SERVICEMEN STATIONED IN BERLIN ARE REGULAR DRUG
ABUSERS. THESE, HOWEVER, COMPRISE ONLY A SMALL PART OF
THE BERLIN CONSUMER GROUP. (THE CODEL OVERSAW THE
ADMINISTERING OF QUESTIONNAIRES AND URINE TESTING
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INVOLVING SEVERAL HUNDRED BERLIN BRIGADE PERSONNEL.)

6. WHILE DRUGS DO ENTER THE CITY WITH RELATIVE EASE
AND FEW PRACTICAL BARRIERS EXIST TO ONWARD TRANSPORT,
THERE DOES NOT APPEAR (YET) TO BE ANY GREAT FLOW OF
DRUGS VIA BERLIN TO WESTERN EUROPE. WE ARE UNAWARE OF

EVIDENCE THAT HEROIN COMING TO BERLIN - OF TURKISH OR MIDDLE EASTERN RATHER THAN SOUTHEAST ASIAN ORIGIN - IS REACHING THE US IN APPRECIABLE QUANTITIES. THIS SITUATION COULD EASILY CHANGE. WE REMAIN PUZZLED, HOWEVER, AS TO THE BASIS FOR THE CODEL'S CONVICTION THAT BERLIN DRUGS ARE ALREADY THERE.

7. THE US IN ANY CASE HAS MORE THAN SUFFICIENT REASON ALREADY TO TAKE A DIRECT INTEREST IN THE BERLIN DRUG PROBLEM. THIS STEMS FROM OUR GENERAL COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS COOPERATION AS WELL AS FROM OUR RESPONSIBILITIES WITH THE UK AND FRANCE FOR ENSURING THE SECURITY, PUBLIC SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF THE WESTERN SECTORS OF THIS STILL-OCCUPIED CITY. THE US HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN ENCOURAGING BERLIN POLICE NARCOTICS EFFORTS. LAST FALL THE POLICE NARCOTICS SQUAD WAS MORE THAN DOUBLED. DEA IS NOW PROVIDING TRAINING TO KEY PERSONNEL, INFORMATION FROM INTERNATIONAL DEA SOURCES - ESPECIALLY FROM TURKEY - REGARDING MAJOR TRAFFICKERS, AND ON THE SPOT ASSISTANCE IN GATHERING INFORMATION ON DEALERS IN BERLIN. THE RESULT HAS BEEN A DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT IN SUPPLY REDUCTION EFFORTS. BERLIN POLICE AND CUSTOMS USING DEA ASSISTANCE AND INFORMANTS HAVE ALREADY SEIZED ONE AND A HALF TIMES AS MUCH HEROIN (6.7) KILOS IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF 1978 AS DURING ALL OF 1977.

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8. AN ESPECIALLY TROUBLESOME ASPECT REMAINS THE OPENNESS OF THE WESTERN SECTORS AND LACK OF CUSTOMS-TYPE CONTROLS OVER MOST POINTS OF ACCESS. TRAVELLERS REACH BERLIN BY ROAD, RAIL, AND AIR. FURTHERMORE, THE EXISTENCE OF A CITY-WIDE SUBWAY AND ELEVATED TRAIN SYSTEM MEANS THAT PERSONS LEAVING THE EASTERN SECTOR OF BERLIN (AFTER PASSING THROUGH GDR CONTROLS) CAN EMERGE FREELY AT ANY ONE OF 179 STATIONS IN THE WESTERN SECTORS. THERE IS NO SERIOUS NARCOTICS PROBLEM IN THE EASTERN SECTOR OF BERLIN OR IN THE GDR. ACCORDINGLY, EASTERN AUTHORITIES, WHO CHECK CAREFULLY FOR SMUGGLING OF PERSONS, APPARENTLY FEEL LITTLE INCENTIVE TO UNDERTAKE THE TYPE OF DETAILED AND TIME-CONSUMING SEARCHES NECESSARY TO UNCOVER DRUGS CARRIED BY TRAVELLERS TRANSITING THE GDR. IN ADDITION, THE GDR ENJOYS CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC BENEFIT FROM PROVIDING LOW COST FLIGHTS ON GDR AIRCRAFT TO AND FROM TURKEY FOR TURKISH WORKERS IN BERLIN'S WESTERN SECTORS. CARRYING OUT EXTENSIVE SEARCHES AT THE GDR'S SCHOENEFELD AIRPORT OF ARRIVING PASSENGERS WOULD CAUSE DELAYS AND LESSEN THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THESE FLIGHTS.

9. INSTITUTING EFFECTIVE CONTROLS FROM THE WESTERN SIDE
ON TRAVELLERS ENTERING THE WESTERN SECTORS WOULD ENTAIL

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MONUMENTAL PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES. THE
QUADRIpartite AGREEMENT ON BERLIN GAINED EASTERN
ACQUIESCENCE FOR THE FIRST TIME TO RELATIVELY UNHINDERED
TRANSIT BETWEEN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND THE WESTERN
SECTORS OF THIS ISLAND CITY FOR WEST GERMANS AND WEST
BERLINERS. TRAFFIC HAS BURGEONED AS A RESULT AND THE
MAJOR CROSSING POINT FROM THE GDR NOW CARRIES SOME
400,000 PASSENGER VEHICLES A MONTH. THERE IS NO WAY
FOR WESTERN OFFICIALS AT THE POINT OF ENTRY TO KNOW
WHICH GERMAN-PLATED VEHICLES TRAVELLED FROM THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC AND WHICH ENTERED THE TRANSIT ROUTE FROM
SOUTHERN EUROPE, WITHOUT STOPPING CARS AND CHECKING ALL
DOCUMENTS FOR GDR ENTRY STAMPS. SUCH A MOVE WOULD
INVOLVE MAJOR BACK-UPS OF TRAFFIC AND BE WIDELY REGARDED
AS A RETROGRESSIVE STEP.

10. PERSONS ARRIVING FROM THE EASTERN PORTION OF THE
CITY INTO THE WESTERN SECTORS PRESENT ANOTHER TYPE OF
PROBLEM. IT IS A CARDINAL WESTERN POSITION, SUPPORTED
BY THE US, UK, FRANCE, AS WELL AS BY THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC AND MOST BERLINERS THAT BERLIN REMAINS ONE
CITY UNDER OCCUPATION STATUS.
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THE WALL NOTWITHSTANDING, THE WEST HOLDS TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT CIRCULATION WITHIN THE CITY SHOULD BE UNIMPEDED. ACCORDINGLY, WHILE AUTHORITIES IN THE WESTERN SECTORS DO EXERCISE PASSPORT AND CUSTOMS CONTROLS WHERE FEASIBLE WITH RESPECT TO PERSONS ARRIVING FROM ABROAD (FROM OUTSIDE GERMANY), IT WOULD UNDERMINE A BASIC WESTERN POLICY TO SET UP INTERNATIONAL BORDER CROSSING-TYPE CONTROLS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY.

11. BERLIN (WEST) AUTHORITIES DO CARRY OUT RANDOM SURPRISE CUSTOMS CHECKS OF PERSONS EXITING FROM SUBWAY OR ELEVATED TRAIN STATIONS. HOWEVER, TO COVER ALL POSSIBLE STATIONS ALL OF THE TIME WOULD REQUIRE THOUSANDS OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS. IT WOULD ALSO MEAN DELAYS FOR ALL PASSENGERS, INCLUDING THOSE BOARDING AND DISEMBARKING WITH THE WESTERN SECTORS. ALTERNATIVELY, STOPPING TRAINS AT CHOKE POINTS WHERE THE LINES ENTER THE WESTERN PART OF THE CITY AFTER PASSING THROUGH EASTERN CONTROLS WOULD DELAY SECTOR/SECTOR TRAFFIC. IT WOULD ALSO FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES AMOUNT TO ESTABLISHING WESTERN INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY CONTROLS WITHIN THE CITY. WE BELIEVE THAT NEITHER THE BRITISH, FRENCH, OR GERMAN AUTHORITIES ARE PREPARED TO TAKE SUCH A STEP.

12. WE HAVE TRIED TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTACKING BERLIN'S DRUG PROBLEMS AS IT REALLY IS, AND OF SEEKING SOLUTIONS WHICH ARE BOTH PRACTICAL AND POLITICALLY REALIZABLE. AS ALREADY INDICATED, WE BELIEVE THAT SERIOUS TAMPERING WITH ACCESS TO THE WESTERN SECTORS OF THE CITY WOULD MEET ALLIED RESISTANCE. HARPING ON THE OPEN CITY PROBLEM CAN ONLY RISE FRUSTRATIONS AND POSSIBLY LEAD TO DEMANDS FOR SUCH CONTROLS, WHICH ARE NOT ACHIEVABLE.

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13. OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE SOLUTION TO BERLIN'S DRUG PROBLEM LIES NOT IN SEALING THE CITY BUT IN MORE ENERGETIC ANTI-DRUG EFFORTS BY THE AUTHORITIES WITHIN THE WESTERN SECTORS, IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH WEST GERMAN NARCOTICS OFFICIALS AND AIDED BY US AND WHATEVER OTHER INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE IS POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON TRAFFICKERS AND SOURCES OF SUPPLY. WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY EFFORTS TO OBTAIN GREATER TURKISH ASSISTANCE, SINCE IT APPEARS THAT MUCH IF NOT MOST OF THE HEROIN COMES FROM OR THROUGH TURKEY. WE DO NOT

BELIEVE THAT GDR AUTHORITIES HAVE MUCH INCENTIVE AT PRESENT TO BE HELPFUL IN INTERDICTING DRUGS TRANSITING THE GDR. PERHAPS CLEARER EVIDENCE, WHEN AVAILABLE, CONCERNING THE USE OF SCHOENEFELD AS A TRANSIT POINT FOR DRUG COURIERS CAN BE USED TO ENCOURAGE STRICTER GDR CONTROLS OVER THIS ONE MEANS AT LEAST OF REACHING THE CITY.

14. DEA COOPERATION HAS BEEN EXTREMELY FORTHCOMING IN SUPPLY REDUCTION EFFORTS AND THERE HAS BEEN NO PROBLEM OF THE NATURE DESCRIBED IN REFTEL C. IT REMAINS AN OPEN QUESTION HOW DEA CAN BE OF MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE IN BERLIN OVER THE LONG RUN. WE UNDERSTAND THAT OUR REQUEST, ENDORSED BY EMBASSY BONN, FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

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OF A DEA AGENT TO BERLIN IS UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION. CONSIDERATION IS ALSO BEING GIVEN TO BRINGING TO BERLIN ON A TDY BASIS A NUMBER OF DEA AGENTS AND INFORMANTS TO WORK WITH TEAMS OF BERLIN POLICE AND CUSTOMS OFFICIALS IN A CONCENTRATED CAMPAIGN TO TRACK DOWN AND ARREST MAJOR DEALERS.

AT THIS POINT THE GOAL FOR BERLIN IS STABILIZATION OF THE HEROIN PROBLEM. IF EFFECTIVE ACTION AGAINST MAJOR DEALERS AS WELL AS STREET SELLERS CAN LESSEN THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE MARKET HERE, PERHAPS THE PATTERN CAN BE ARRESTED BEFORE BERLIN BECOMES IN FACT A MAJOR TRANSIT POINT FOR DEALERS WESTWARD.

15. GIVEN THE LONG-TERM NATURE OF THE BERLIN DRUG PROBLEM AND THE OBSTACLES TO COPING WITH IT, WE ANTICIPATE THAT THOSE FRUSTRATED WITH SLOW PROGRESS MAY LOOK FOR SCAPEGOATS. THERE HAS BEEN SOME INCLINATION IN THIS RESPECT TO BLAME THE BERLIN DRUG PROBLEM ON THE GDR AUTHORITIES' UNWILLINGNESS TO STOP DRUGS AT ACHOENEFELD AIRPORT. THIS OF COURSE OVERLOOKS THE WEST'S OWN UNWILLINGNESS TO INSTITUTE CONTROLS, AND ALSO IGNORES
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THE FACT THAT SCHOENEFELD HANDLES ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF PERSONS TRAVELLING TO BERLIN.

16. WE WOULD ESPECIALLY WISH TO AVOID RAISING THE OLD SAW THAT AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE DEALING OR SMUGGLING DRUGS. AS STATED, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THEY ARE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE A GOOD NUMBER OF BERLINERS WHO WOULD FIND SUCH STORIES PLAUSIBLE. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE BOTH UNFAIR TO US MILITARY PERSONNEL IN GENERAL AND DIVERT ATTENTION FROM THE REAL DRUG PROBLEM.

17. AS IN THE CASE OF CODEL BURKE, WE ARE ANXIOUS TO PROVIDE OUR VIEW OF BERLIN'S DRUG PROBLEM TO ANY VISITOR CONCERNED WITH NARCOTICS MATTERS. SO AS TO STAY ABREAST OF CONGRESSIONAL CONCERNS AND TO BE IN A POSITION TO EVALUATE OUR THINKING IN LIGHT OF OVERALL US INTERESTS, WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING POUCHED COPIES OF ANY CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS OR OTHER REPORTS BEARING ON THE BERLIN NARCOTICS PROBLEM. THE CODEL BURKE TRIP REPORT, WHEN AVAILABLE, WOULD BE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST. GEORGE

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